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So, what's communication all about?

In a recent blog at grantcraft.org, Marc Moorghen, communications director for the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, reflects on his job description:

"In its most elementary state, communication is an exchange of information between people or groups of people. Communicators facilitate that exchange between people inside and outside the organization ..."

"This may sound easy, but in practice, it means negotiating with more than 50 people in six departments and ensuring we're all on the same page and in agreement."

He points out that a recent study, *The Strategic Communication Imperative*, found that "the companies most likely to recognize the strategic communication imperative are those in which the CEO has an inherent understanding of how communication can be a differentiator for a business and thus can drive strategy."

"This is often the most difficult part of any communicator's job: does the boss buy into the importance of communications?" asks Moorghen.

— From grantcraft.org

PUBLIC VALUE PARTNERSHIPS

The Three Rs at work in Montana

Public Value Partnership grants between Montana nonprofit arts organizations and the Montana Arts Council champion the fact that the arts are of benefit to all the citizens of Montana and are worthy of state and federal investment.

Public Value Partnerships utilize three tools we call "The Three Rs" to expand the public value of the work being done by Montana's non-profit arts organizations:

- Building relationships;
- Creating greater relevance and meaning; and
- Establishing return on investment (measured both as economic vitality and impact on people's lives).

MAC believes that using "The Three Rs" strengthens participation, understanding and support from audiences, donors and funders. We'd like to share some of the best examples of these stories with you from 2013:

Building Relationships

Bozeman Symphony: The Bozeman Symphony made personal contact and follow-up with our audience and supporters a priority last year. We increased our contact with patrons with phone calls made by board members, staff and volunteers on a regular basis.

We have found that our supporters had great things to say about the Bozeman Symphony and also many suggestions that allowed us to take a look at our processes and procedures. This has allowed us to improve our patron services.

We've continued our Dress Rehearsal evening with the Treats for Tickets program. Each concert, one elementary or middle school music class volunteers to bring a plate of treats for the musicians' break time in exchange for tickets for one of the weekend performances for the student and a parent. They also are allowed to stay for the dress rehearsal.

The most amazing aspect of the program is watching the young student musicians (who serve the treats) and their parents learning from the musicians and music conductor. The organization believes that this program inspires and motivates students to work toward excelling on their instruments so that one day they can be a part of a symphony orchestra or choir. The program also gives participating students and their parents an educational opportunity to learn about the rehearsal process, the musicians, guest artists, music and instruments of the orchestra.

The Bozeman Symphony continues to offer after-concert receptions at area locations where we have increased the number of patrons and musicians that attend. The music director and guest artists also attended this past year.

There are limitless opportunities for the audience, both young and old, to visit one on one with our internationally known guest

artists, local musicians and our music director. Not only does educational learning take place, but relationships are started that last a lifetime. We learned that our audience is appreciative of this opportunity to learn more about the music and the musicians.

Creating Relevance

Sunburst Community Foundation, Eureka: During fall 2012, a local scout leader asked if she could use the Sunburst meeting room for her weekly Girl Scout meetings. Gradually we built a relationship between the members of the troop and Sunburst.

Her troop helped pick up litter along the Kootenai Rail-to-Trail (a Sunburst project) and handed out programs at some of our concerts. Sunburst offers community classes on a regular basis, and when the scout leader asked about classes her young girls might enjoy, we arranged some. Later the leader taught some classes for us including soap making and lotion making.

When Sunburst began sponsoring Pecha Kucha Nights in Eureka, the troop attended and then asked if they could participate in the following one. It was fantastic! Girls aged 8-11

followed directions and did a wonderful job performing, but he couldn't quite resist the urge to be himself.

After the performer gave the kids the cue to stop playing, my kiddo busted out a solo that reverberated through the whole gym and earned him a standing ovation from his peers, teachers and the performers of On Ensemble. He glowed with delight as he gently set down his sticks and returned to his seat.

As I was helping kids line up for the bus, he grabbed my leg in a bear hug and said, "It's a great day to be in school, Ms. Mandy!"

I can't say his behavior was perfect for the rest of the school year, but I saw a marked difference. We made a "taiko drum" for him to play as a reward for good behavior.

Had it not been for the Southwest Montana Arts Council's dedication to bringing innovative arts programming to our community and particularly our schools, this kiddo may have never seen, let alone played, a taiko drum.

— Mandy Maass, Executive Director



Sunburst Community Foundation: Artist-in-Residence Paul Taylor creates a mural of the Tobacco Valley with community members. The mural now hangs outside of the Eureka Thrift Store, welcoming people as they drive in from the south end of town. (Photo by Rita Collins)



Dr. Noize Crashes The Symphony: The Bozeman Symphony's free children and family concert educates and entertains 3,300 children, parents and grandparents.

years old gave wonderful presentations. The audience was impressed and the girls learned how to do PowerPoint presentations and stand on a stage. It was definitely a win-win situation for us all.

Return on Investment – Impact on People's Lives

Southwest Montana Arts Council, Dillon: Before becoming the executive director of our arts council, I worked at the elementary school with special ed and at-risk youth, so I was involved with an artist residency at the school.

One of my kiddos comes from a family with a variety of problems, not the least of which is one child with autism and one with severe anger issues. This particular kid was too young to start kindergarten but was allowed because his mother was convicted of selling drugs in the home and his grandmother and



Southwest Montana Arts Council: The On Ensemble offered a residency at Parkview Elementary on March 6, 2013 that was attended by more than 400 pre-K through 5th graders from the local elementary school, as well as rural schools across Beaverhead County. (Photo by Mandy Maass)

IRS rolls out new 1023-EZ for exempt applications

The Internal Revenue Service recently launched the new Form 1023-EZ, a shorter version of the traditional application for groups seeking 501(c)(3) exempt status.

According to a press release, as many as 70 percent of 501(c)(3) hopefuls are eligible to submit the three-page form, edited down from the 26-page original. The new form is available to certain organizations with gross receipts up to \$50,000 and assets up to \$250,000.

IRS Commissioner John Koskinen said the change will reduce

wait times for applicants and enable his agency to "devote more compliance activity on the back end to ensure groups are actually doing the charitable work they apply to do."

Unlike its longer counterpart, the Form 1023-EZ must be filed electronically. Some sector leaders raise concerns about the new form, including the fact that applicants miss the educational benefits inherent in completing the full Form 1023.

Learn more at www.irs.gov/uac/About-Form-1023EZ.

— Source: BNA Daily Tax Report